



2001 Wetland Reserve Program

Upper Duck Cove Salt Marsh Restoration Project

Upper Duck Cove is a 7 to 8 acre salt marsh. In the early thirties, a man made earth and stone causeway was built dividing the upper cove from the lower cove. Over time, this caused a decrease of saltwater flow from the upper cove thus changing the native plants, aquatic life, and wildlife. During the fifties, an 18-inch pipe was installed under the causeway to allow some flow of saltwater to reach the salt marsh. The pipe collapsed six years ago, thus decreasing tidal flow even more. Consequently, native salt marsh grasses (*Spartina*) have been replaced by the more invasive *Phragmites*, a common reed that thrives in brackish water and alters the salt marsh habitat.

A group of neighbors in the Duck Cove area formed the *Duck Cove Bluff Association* and collaborated with another neighborhood association, the *Lone Tree Point Neighborhood Association*, to find a way to restore the salt marsh. Their goal was for the native grasses and the wildlife to return, as they were, decades ago. They approached the Southern RI Conservation District for help. The District partnered with the Rhode Island NRCS, the Town of North Kingstown, and state and local environmental groups to find a solution to the derogated salt marsh.

With the help of the WRP program and the locally led partnership, a plan was designed and implemented. A 3-4 foot box culvert replaced the collapsed pipe. For flood protection, flashboards were installed in the upper end of the culvert; this helped to regulate the flow of saltwater. Ditches in the marsh were cleaned to help improve tidal flow, with an added benefit of mosquito control. The marsh will be monitored for five years to evaluate the effectiveness of the restoration in regards to changes in salinity, tides, and vegetation.

Rhode Island Summary

Overview

In 1999, the Rhode Island Coastal Habitat Restoration team, an interagency team that includes NRCS, identified 70 high priority candidates for ecological restoration. Many of these potential projects could be funded and implemented, at least partially, through WRP. The Rhode Island Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership (CWRP), a public-private partnership to restore degraded wetlands, rivers, and fish and wildlife habitat in Rhode Island was established and received its initial corporate donations. These donations of money and in-kind services will fund priority habitat restoration projects developed by the Coastal Habitat Restoration Team. NRCS expects an increase in demand for technical and financial assistance through WRP due to recent successes; the ongoing work of the Coastal Habitat Restoration team; and the support of government, corporate and other private sector entities interested in coastal marsh and freshwater wetland restoration in the Narragansett Bay and other areas.

Accomplishments

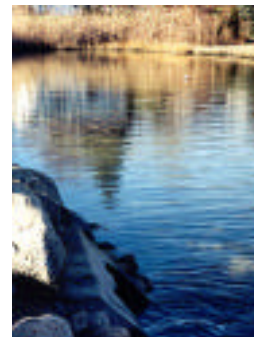
Rhode Island began participating in the WRP program three years ago and the demand for the program is growing. Rhode Island celebrated the installation of its first WRP funded project (Upper Duck Cove Salt Marsh) with a ribbon cutting ceremony in December 2001. The Upper Duck Cove Salt Marsh restoration project demonstrates that a locally led effort involving a variety of State, local and Federal agencies, conservation districts, and non-profit organizations can and does succeed. NRCS is currently in the process of planning and designing three other WRP projects. Designs have been completed for a 6-acre coastal salt pond and salt marsh project on Prudence Island in Narragansett Bay, a survey for a 10-acre salt marsh restoration project on Block Island is being completed, and funds have recently been obligated for Walker's Farm. Walker's Farm is a 25-acre tidally restricted salt marsh in the Narragansett Bay estuary system. This project was selected as a pilot project for restoration under the newly established Rhode Island Corporate Wetlands Restoration partnership.

Program Benefits

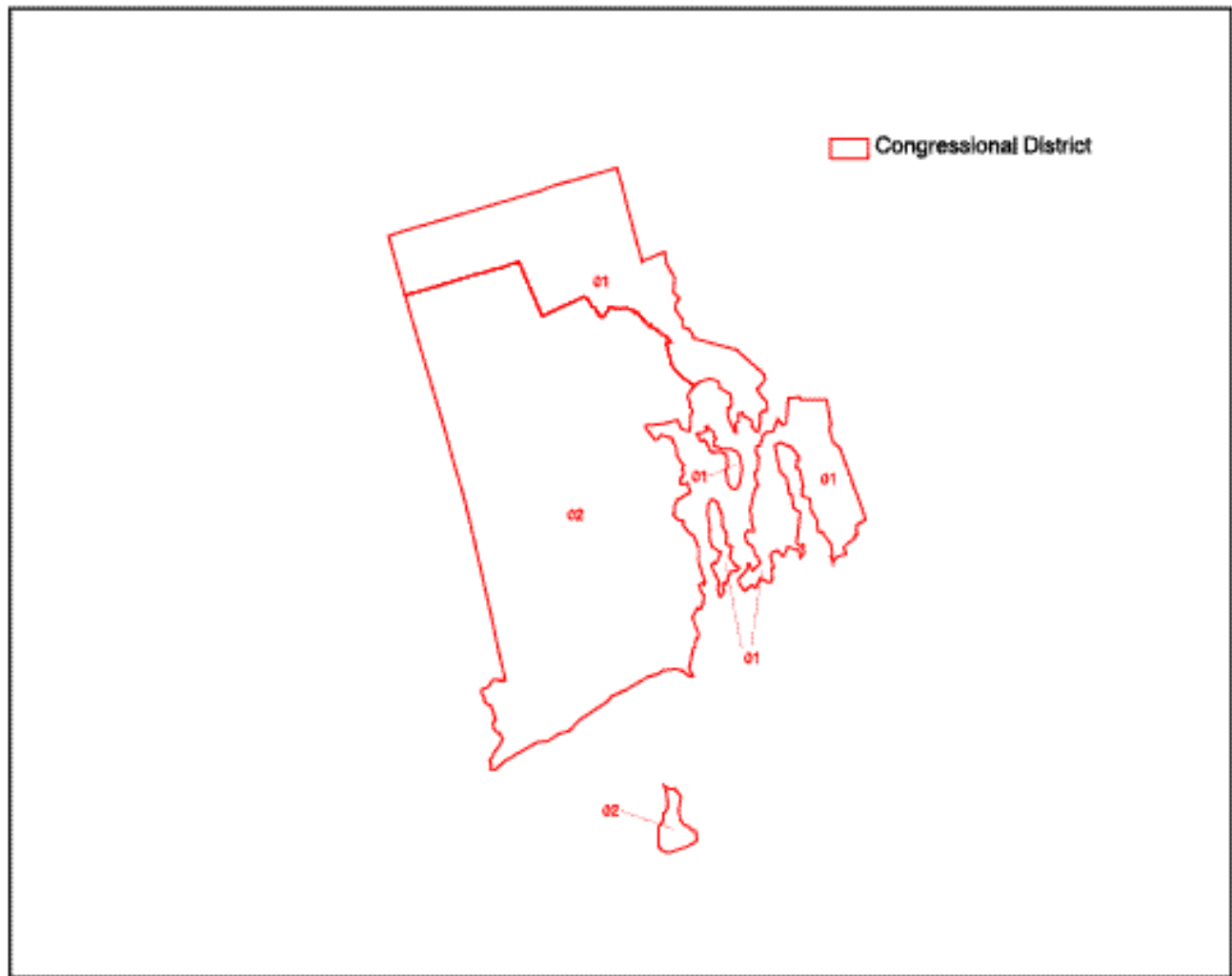
Program funding, besides providing private landowners with financial resources to restore coastal wetlands, is creating the partnerships in Rhode Island that can provide landowners with the best wetland restoration expertise. All four Rhode Island projects will encourage the growth of native coastal vegetation, over invasion plants providing habitat for a broader diversity of fish, and wildlife.

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Rhode Island's WRP Dollars and Contracts by Congressional District



Rhode Island's WRP Dollars and Contracts

Congressional Districts	Fiscal Year 2001		Cumulative Total (96-01)	
	Obligated Dollars	Number of Contracts	Obligated Dollars	Number of Contracts
District 1	\$70,000	1	\$95,000	2
District 2			50,991	2
State Totals	\$70,000	1	\$145,991	4

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